



For Immediate Release
March 22, 2007

Contact: Carol Guthrie (Baucus) 224-4515
Steven Broderick (Rockefeller) 224-6101

BAUCUS, ROCKEFELLER WIN SENATE COMMITMENT TO CHIP
Amendment affirms action needed on Children's Health Insurance Program this year

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Health Subcommittee Chairman John D. Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) have secured a commitment in the Senate budget to renewal of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) this year. The Senate unanimously approved a Baucus-Rockefeller amendment requiring action on the expiring program before September 30, 2007. Baucus and Rockefeller helped to craft the CHIP program in Congress 10 years ago. It provides health coverage to 6.6 American children today.

"The Senate is right to put American kids at the head of the line for health coverage. Renewing the Children's Health Insurance Program, and reaching more children who need it, is my number-one health priority this year," said Baucus. **"In the Finance Committee, we'll move quickly and aggressively to renew and strengthen CHIP's promise for kids."**

"The Senate is now squarely on record that our kids come first, and that reauthorizing CHIP is a top priority this year," said Rockefeller. **"I look forward to working with Chairman Baucus to strengthen, and build upon, the commitment that we made ten years ago to provide health care to one of our most vulnerable populations – our kids."**

The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over the CHIP program and will be responsible for its reauthorization this year. Baucus and Rockefeller were successful in securing a commitment of \$50 billion for CHIP over the next five years in the FY 2008 budget. The Senators have committed not only to preserving coverage for current CHIP recipients, but to expanding coverage to more of the six million American children who are eligible for public health programs but not enrolled.

"One child without health insurance is one child too many. Our budget keeps CHIP chartered on the right course to fulfill our moral obligation to take care of our kids," said Rockefeller.

"With dollars and now with deadlines, this budget shows a strong commitment to making the Children's Health Insurance Program the best it can be," Baucus said. **"Congress made a great start by creating CHIP ten years ago. Now, working together, we can double its reach and change the lives of millions more American kids who need health coverage and care."**

Cosponsors of the amendment included Senators Robert Casey (D-Penn.), Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.), Joseph Biden (D-Del.), Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.).